

Bridging Charlotte to the Future

Seven out of the 10 LYNX Blue Line Extension (BLE) light rail bridges are currently under construction. The BLE project includes five light rail bridges along the existing railroad corridor, a railroad bridge for Norfolk Southern tracks across E. 36th Street, four light rail bridges along North Tryon Street, and the final light rail bridge of the alignment across Toby Creek approaching the UNC Charlotte Station area.

In the existing railroad corridor, construction crews are building mechanically stabilized earth (MSE) walls for the light rail bridges across CSX and AC&W railroad tracks. These walls are assembled with pre-cast concrete panels that include a textured surface that resembles ribbing. The walls on each side of the future light rail tracks are being built simultaneously. Crews interlock the panels on each side, place compacted dirt and stone in between the two sides and continue building each layer upon layer. The light rail tracks will be on top of the fill that is contained inside these wall panels, slowly rising as it approaches the bridge. Currently, crews are working on drilling piers and forming the columns that will support the middle of the bridge that crosses the freight railroad tracks.

At Little Sugar Creek, adjacent to North Brevard Street, crews have been constructing the abutments that support the beams for the bridge and are drilling for the bridge piers. Farther north, steel pile has already been driven for part of the light rail bridge that crosses Craighead Road. Driving steel pile is one of the first stages of bridge construction. Large columns of steel pile are then driven into the ground at each bridge location to support the abutments.

A glimpse of the Art in Transit panels used for some of the light rail bridges along the alignment can be seen at the intersection of North Tryon Street and the I-85 Connector. The panels, designed by artist Carolyn Braaksma, represent indigenous North Carolina plants and flowers. Crews are installing the panels for the MSE walls and constructing the abutments. At the University City Boulevard intersection, crews have been grading and are beginning MSE wall construction, featuring the same Art in Transit panels.



Light rail bridge over CSX



MSE retaining walls and abutment for light rail bridge over I-85 Connector



Public art at the light rail bridge at N. Tryon St. and I-85 Connector intersection

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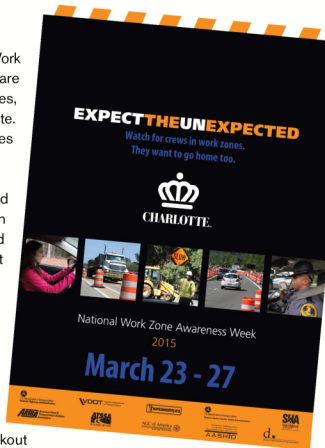
Expect the **UNEXPECTED**

"Expect the Unexpected" was the theme of the 2015 National Work Zone Awareness Week, March 23–27. Thousands of workers are serving the public every day; maintaining and building bridges, roadways, sewers, catch basins, utility lines and removing waste. The Blue Line Extension project alone has many work zones stretching between uptown and the University City area.

"CDOT stresses motorists, bicyclists and pedestrians should look out for others and themselves in the Blue Line Extension work zones. The construction crews want to stay safe and go home at the end of the day. Everybody wants this and it can happen if patience and caution are always top of mind," said Linda Durrett, Charlotte Department of Transportation Communications and Public Relations Manager.

The City of Charlotte continues to ask motorists to slow down in the vicinity of all work zones to keep the community safe. Motorists traveling through work zone areas should be alert and extra cautious. Drivers should always remember to get in the correct lane well in advance and constantly be on the lookout for vehicles merging into adjacent travel lanes as they approach a work zone. Drivers should also double their following distance.

Please ALWAYS be mindful when you are around construction zones.



Blue Line Capacity Expansion: Stations Under Construction

As we gear up for the Blue Line to extend to UNC Charlotte, we are also expanding some of our current Blue Line station platforms so three-car trains can be accommodated. Be on the lookout for construction work at I-485 Station (complete), Woodlawn Station, Stonewall Station and 7th Street Station. All access to trains and nearby businesses will be maintained, however we do urge the traveling public to practice caution while at these four stations, stay alert and make sure that if you see anything that doesn't seem right, you say something by calling 704-336-RIDE (7433). As we grow to support great light rail service in Charlotte, remember to play your part in safety in and around stations under construction.

March 18 Business Information Session

The Blue Line Extension Communications Team hosted another successful Quarterly Business Information session engaging the public in what it means to have a business affected by construction along the alignment, an update on construction, chances to ask and answer questions and talk about resources available. We look forward to hosting the next Business Quarterly Information Session in June of this year, be on the lookout at your place of business for a post card alerting you of the date, time and location for that event!



UNDER CONSTRUCTION

Traffic conditions have drastically changed along North Tryon Street from Old Concord Road to UNC Charlotte. Please stay alert and keep in mind the following:

- Speed limit along North Tryon Street has been reduced to 35 MPH
- Left turns & U-turns are restricted now to a few locations along North Tryon Street
- Lane closures are in place daily

You will experience:

- Shifting traffic lanes and narrowing of existing travel lanes
- Pedestrian path changes
- Bus stop relocations
- Traffic delays

**Remember
SAFETY FIRST!!!**

WATCH OUT for
directions from flaggers
and signage!

STAY ALERT for
changing traffic conditions
and congestion!

PLAN AHEAD so you
can reach your destination
on time.



Bridging Charlotte to the Future cont.

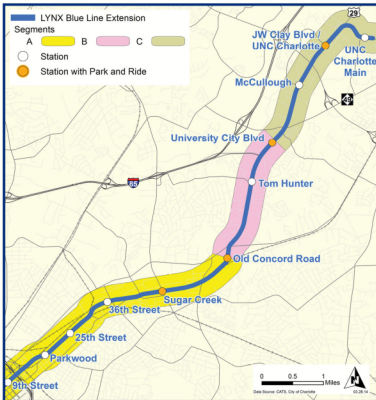
Along the Toby Creek Greenway, pedestrians and cyclists can see the progress on the light rail bridge that will cross Toby Creek. Crews have finished drilling for the 20 piers that will support this bridge. Crews have also begun preliminary steps for construction of the remaining bridges. They have been excavating for the Norfolk Southern bridge over E. 36th Street. After the Norfolk Southern bridge is complete, crews can begin work on the parallel light rail bridge. These two bridges create a grade separation at E. 36th Street. Before construction began, vehicles would have to wait at a grade crossing for a freight train to pass. Once E. 36th Street is reopened, vehicles will travel underneath the new LYNX Blue Line Extension and Norfolk Southern bridges, eliminating the need to stop at a crossing. Improvements to the intersection of Old Concord Road and North Tryon Street are also underway. Crews have recently closed Old Concord Road at North Tryon Street for roadway and bridge construction. They will be reconfiguring the intersection, constructing new sidewalks, adding an entrance off Old Concord Road for the station, and beginning construction of the light rail bridge that spans between the station and the median of North Tryon.



Piers and caps for light rail bridge over Toby Creek

BLE Alignment

Below is the BLE Alignment map by segment:



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CATS has developed tools for you to stay informed about BLE construction updates. We want to hear from you! Your feedback is important to us. Let us know your questions or comments.

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